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ABSTRACT

A multiparadigm perspective of educational administration is offered in this paper, which offers a conceptualization of administration as a heuristic device for considering multiple views of education. The first section describes the work of Sirotnik and Oakes (1986) whose "critical inquiry" multipardigm approach comprises three paradigms: structural functionalist, interpretivist, and critical theory. Feminist poststructural theory, which addresses some of the limitations of critical theory, is proposed as a fourth paradigm. A multiparadigm approach conbining each of these four approaches is then described. The second section explains the usefulness of the multiparadigm approach for educational administration. Such an approach compensates for the limitations of individual theories and acknowledges multiple ways of knowing. The third section briefly provides examples of the ways in which each paradigm can inform practice and theory. Critical theory and feminist poststructural theory offer the promotion of social change and empowerment. The summary argues that feminist poststructural theory is useful because it includes the subjective and affective, offers multiple approaches to and the inclusion of the identity of all persons, and appreciates contradiction and complexity. One table outlines feminist poststructural theories in terms of subjectivity, language and discourse, power, and common sense. (51 references) (LMI)

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Multiparadigm perspectives of administration: Informing theory and practice

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Multiparadigm perspectives of administration:

Informing theory and practice

Trainers, researchers, and practitioners concerned with organizations and administration ground their work primarily in one paradigm, or in "one theoretical story"--structural functionalism (Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Willower, 1980), interpretivism (Bates, 1980; Greenfield, 1983), or critical theory (Anderson, 1990; Ferrel-Zey & Aiken, 1981; Foster, 1986a). At worst, scholars, particularly those within the structural functional tradition, may fail to accord legitimacy to the fact that other theoretical stories even exist to understand organizations. At best, scholars may "tell other theoretical stories"; that is, they acknowledge theories rooted in other paradigms, but implicitly or explicitly maintain the ontological, epistemological, and methodological supremacy of their own preferred paradigm, which supersedes and is independent of other paradigms.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a multiparadigm perspective of educational administration as one way in which to view the field. This multiparadigm approach does not suggest a "grand theory," nor does it position itself as the only way to view educational administration, but it offers a conceptualization of administration as a heuristic device for considering multiple views of administration.

When considering a multiparadigm approach to educational administration, some questions to be deliberated include: a) What is a multiparadigm approach to educational administration and how is it derived? b) Even though this paper admits that a multiparadigm approach is just one way to view educational administration, why is it a useful approach for this purpose? and c) How can this approach be used in administrator practice and preparation?

To address the first question, the bulk of this paper describes the individual paradigms which comprise a multiparadigm approach to educational administration and how they were derived. Following this description, this paper also addresses the second question and explains why a multiparadigm approach can be useful for educational administration. This paper also briefly addresses question three by providing examples of the ways each paradigm can inform practice and theory in educational administration.

Critical inquiry is used as the grounding conceptual framework for this multiparadigm approach (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986). The epistemological foundation and practical application of critical inquiry are described, and the limitations of the critical theory aspect of this approach are discussed. Feminist poststructuralist theory and its constructs are then defined and used to address the limitations of critical inquiry.

Multiparadigm Origins

According to Burrell and Morgan (1982), sociological theory can be aligned along two axes--one axis represents a continuum of the nature of science (objective to subjective), and the other represents a continuum of the nature of society (sociology of regulation to sociology of radical change). Together, these axes form four quadrants which can represent different theoretical paradigms: structural functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist, and radical structuralist.[1] Often, differences between radical humanism and radical structuralism are not made explicit, and critical theory is referred to as a theory which spans both paradigms, thus constituting a third paradigm (Foster, 1986a; Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986; Popkewitz, 1988).

Social theorists and scholars in educational administration are not unanimous in their support for Burrell and Morgan's conceptualization of paradigms or, indeed, in their belief that paradigms even exist (Evers & Lakomski, 1991). Some theorists and scholars (including Burrell and Morgan themselves (1982)) give credence to the paradigms, but believe they cannot be used together to view a situation, that they are incommensurable (Foster, 1986a; Jackson & Carter, 1991; Parker & McHugh, 1991). These scholars argue that the paradigms are incommensurable not only because they are constituted by differing epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies and their associated language, but also because they have fundamentally different goals; that is,

two are oriented toward social regulation and two are oriented toward radical change.

Other scholars of organizations (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Hassard, 1991) and of education (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986) argue, however, that theoretical paradigms need not be exclusive (or incommensurable), but may be used in concert in both theory and practice. For example, Gioia and Pitre present a multiparadigm view of organizations, and Hassard (1991) demonstrates how to use all four paradigms in research on organizations. Sirotnik and Oakes combine structural functionalism, interpretivism, and critical theory into a practical, educational approach they term critical inquiry. Sirotnik and Oakes apply their critical inquiry to a case study in one school in which their role was as outside collaborators. Relying on the work of Freire, they were self-consciously committed to horizontal power structures in all aspects of their work. For example, they sought to be invited by the school, and strived to have the goals and process of school change emerge from discussions with a broad range of participants. School and community people participated in all aspects of the process, including data collection and analysis.

This multiparadigm perspective of administration relies on the critical inquiry approach of Sirotnik and Oakes (1986). But while their approach is liberating, it has weaknesses, in part, because of the limitations of critical theory. This paper will first explain each paradigm used by Sirotnik and Oakes, and

describe its implications for practice. The paper then suggests that feminist poststructural theories can address some of the limitations of critical theory, and, accordingly, can be used as a fourth paradigm to view theory and practice. It is the combination of these four paradigms which constitutes the basis of a multiparadigm approach for informing theory and practice.[2]

Further, because the parameters of Burrell and Morgan's (1982) paradigms lie on a continuum, and because of the complexities of organizational life, the paradigms themselves are not pure, nor does any application of the paradigm to any entity render that entity a "pure" example of the paradigm. This aspect of paradigms is also true for the multiparadigm approach for educational administration presented here. For theory and practice, a multiparadigm approach could also be used simplistically, drawing artificial boundaries around thought and practice in rigid, functional ways. These limitations should guide the cautious use of a multiparadigm approach.

This paper gives greatest attention to the critical and feminist poststructural paradigms. The structural functionalist and interpretivist paradigms have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature in educational administration. The critical theory approach to educational administration has been receiving more attention, but primarily from the perspective that it is the antidote to the ills of the other two paradigms. In this paper, I describe the main tenets of critical theory as

well as its limitations. I then give the most attention to feminist poststructuralism--an approach which is just beginning to find its way into education.

The structural-functionalist paradigm

Historically, organizational theorists have viewed the relationship between organizations and their environments from a structural-functionalist perspective rooted in systems theory. Theorists whose work originates in this paradigm strive toward regulation and approach knowledge from an objectivist viewpoint. The functionalist approach directly applies the principles of natural science to social science. Burrell and Morgan (1982) explain: "The functionalist approach to social science tends to assume that the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artifacts and relationships which can be identified, studied, and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences" (p. 26). Structural functionalists in educational administration tend to view the existing social order and its institutions as legitimate and desirable. While they often seek to make improvements in the operation of education, they accept its basic structures and roles, and the nature of the societal context schools serve. They are interested in understanding how institutions work and how they might work more efficiently and smoothly, assuming that various forms of social injustices can be corrected while maintaining existing systems intact. Language to

describe this paradigm includes rational, efficient, concrete, real, standardized, goal orientated, and traditional.[3]

Critical inquiry uses structural functionalist epistemologies and methodologies in part to guide ". . . systematic and standardized data-based exploration methodology" (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986, p. 33). The kind of data to collect and the manner of collection is determined by a variety of participants with the goal of finding out "the way things are" (p. 34). Critical inquiry in this stage includes collecting information on "static characteristics" or "what is" in a situation, patterns of behavior ["what people do, how they interact with each other and with the things in the environment" (p. 33)], and "sentiments" or feelings of persons. For example, a school which is incorporating outcomes-based education as part of its restructuring efforts, guided by many different representatives of power, could gather data on the status of outcomes-based education in the second and third grades. Data could include the curriculum guiding the approach, which students consistently move from the "basic" to the "extended" curriculum and which do not, and how students, parents, and teachers view the approach.

The interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm posits that organizations are socially constructed and exist only in the perceptions of people. Based on subjectivity, an interpretivist approach to

organizations focuses on social life interactions and the meaning of these interactions as perceived by individuals, rather than on so-called objective reality. Moreover, because this paradigm is rooted in the sociology of regulation, "the problems of conflict, domination, contradiction, potentiality and change play no part in [the] theoretical framework" (Burrell & Morgan, 1982, p. 31). In other words, interpretivists share structural functionalists' assumption that the existing social order and its institutions are legitimate and not problematic. While structural functionalists are concerned mainly with how organizations operate, interpretivists, however, are concerned mainly with how people experience them. Language associated with interpretivism includes interpretations of reality, reflection on events, and organizational culture.[4]

Critical inquiry uses interpretivist epistemologies and methodologies to provide participant meaning and understanding to the characteristics, patterns of behavior, and feelings of persons. Revealing these meanings enables participants to peer into their own belief systems, attitudes, assumptions, and ideologies underlying their educational practices. Using interviews and observations of events and interactions in this interpretive mode can uncover the similar and differing perceptions of "what's happening" in the school. This process of reflection can move participants into deeper meanings, below "ordinary understandings" and "common sense" assumptions. Using

the interpretivist paradigm ". . . decisions for change become informed ones; they can be made with an understanding of the meanings that school participants assign to the way things are now" (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986, p. 36).

Critical theory

Typically, discussions of critical theory in educational administration begin with a review of the principles and constructs of critical theory. Major principles and assumptions of critical theory gleaned from these reviews will be discussed here.

Concern for suffering and oppression. Critical theorists in educational administration assume society is cloaked in suffering and oppression. As Gioia and Pitre (1990) point out, "the goal of [this] theory is to free organization members from sources of domination, alienation, exploitation, and repression" (p. 588). Although terms like "oppression", "the disadvantaged" and "the dispossessed" are not explicitly defined, critical theory, because of its foundation in Marxian thought, refers primarily to social class in terms of oppression. Being "oppressed" is defined as the inability to participate in capitalist society, primarily in economic terms (Smyth, 1989). Anderson (1990) suggests, however, that critical ethnography "attempts to redress the dominant managerial bias of current research in educational administration by illuminating how current structures of social class, patriarchy, and race are

sustained through the ways meaning is managed in educational institutions (p. 50). Dantley (1990) also includes race and gender in his critical analysis of effective schools. Thus, more contemporary critical theorists allude to gender, race, and class in their scholarly work.

"Critical" view of education. Critical theorists in educational administration draw support for their arguments primarily from the Frankfurt school, most notably from Habermas (Anderson, 1990; Foster, 1980, 1986a-b). Critical theorists take a "critical" view of schooling and explicitly link schooling to its historical, political, economic, and social context (Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986). Foster (1986a) believes that "critical theory is based, first and foremost, in a critical analysis of the capitalistic system" (p. 67). Further, a critical view is defined as one which determines whether past and current practices address social justice and empowerment, and whether those practices have a commitment to oppressed persons. Therefore, administrators must critically examine situations "taken-for-granted" and "common sense" assumptions about schooling, determine "to what degree . . . this administrative practice contribute[s] to the development of truth, freedom, or justice, and offer[s] options for change" (Foster, 1986a, p. 255).

Others offer definitions grounded in practice, such as

". . . school leaders. . . [must] analyze their organizations and their structural and ideological features within the larger social context" (Dantley, 1990, p. 115). This analysis exposes "how some individual and groups have access to resources and others do not; why some groups are underrepresented and others are not; why certain influences prevail and others do not" (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986, p. 594).

Leadership/authority. Critical theorists in educational administration question the uses of authority in schools, and assert that "power is often exercised through unobtrusive forms of control", primarily through knowledge and communication (Foster, 1986a, p. 44). Critical theorists do not question the assumption that a "leader" or position of authority is necessary in schools and they do not criticize hierarchy or patriarchal structures. Instead, administrators grounded in critical theory are individuals who try to find others who will lead, and posit that leaders need to have a different agenda from status quo leaders; that is, an agenda of social change.

Empowerment and transformation. Educational administration from a critical view argues administrators should "empower" and "share power" with staff, students and community (described as followers), and in turn, "transform" society. In part, administrators empower others by helping the oppressed become aware of their oppression. The assumption is that administrators who understand the nature of the oppressed person's reality

better than the person, can empower them and thus "giv[e] voice to the voiceless."

Emphasis on morals and values. Critical theory in educational administration reunites facts with values (Foster, 1980, 1986a-b; Greenfield, 1985). The administrator must practice morally and be ultimately concerned with freedom, equality, and principles of a democratic society.

The power of the intellect. The necessity of superior intellect is another fundamental assumption of critical theory. Education leaders must be, in Giroux's (1988) phrase, "transformative intellectuals" who know how to analyze critically modern forms of discourse which disguise power relationships and who can bring to a specific site the ability to inform and educate" (p. 18). Thus, critical theory in the administration of schools assumes significant intellectual prowess to ascertain the presence of suffering and oppression, to critically analyze situations to determine their link to social inequity, to be able to exercise leadership and authority, to empower followers, and to recognize the moral imperative in their actions.

An emphasis on rationality. Oppressed followers are empowered, situations are critically analyzed, authority is exercised, and moral concerns are aligned in administrative action, through clear, rational thought. The cause and effect determination of critical theory is straightforward: If we take this action, then empowerment, transformation, and, indeed,

revolution will occur. This rational thought and action is manifested in speech and language in social situations (Dantley, 1990; Foster, 1986a-b). Finally, critical theorists in educational administration emphasize dialectics, meaning the ability to reflect in every proposition its opposite (Foster, 1986a).

Summary. Grounded in the work of the Frankfurt School, critical theorists in educational administration are ultimately concerned with suffering and oppression, and critically reflect on current and historical social inequities. They believe in the imperative of leadership and authority, and work toward the empowerment and transformation of followers, while grounding decisions in morals and values. Finally, critical theory relies on intellectual acumen and support of a dialectical, rational interchange. The unity of theory and practice, and recognition of the importance of language as a means of control, also are important to critical theory.

Limitations of Critical Theory

Limitations of structural-functionalism (Greenfield, 1983) and interpretivism (Foster, 1986a) have been addressed in the educational administration literature thus they won't be repeated here. Predictably, advocates of structural-functionalism oppose critical theory in educational administration (Willower, 1980). Critical theory, however, has also been challenged by persons

within a number of different fields who are supportive of nonpositivist perspectives, because of its' emphasis on rationality, its approach to oppression, its reliance on competent communication, its dependence on dialogue, and its consensus approach to conflict.

First, critical theorists rely on rationality and structure (Liston, 1988). Meisenhelder (1989) argues that critical theory's dependence on rationality fails to legitimate the place of the subjective and of emotion in theory. Consequently, objective abstractions of the mind are given preeminence over subjective experiences. Ellsworth (1989) asserts that, "rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others" (p. 301).

Second, critical theory legitimates analyses of class over gender and other oppressions, emphasizes the sanctity of the "holy trinity" of gender, race, or class, or, as with Sirotnik and Oakes, fails to address specifically those persons along the axis of oppression (MacKinnon, 1983; Fraser & Nicholson, 1988; Joseph, 1981; Kitzinger 1987).

Third, Lakomski (1987) draws attention to the concepts of "communicative competence and the ideal speech situation" and argues that with an emphasis on "speech" and "words," critical theory effectively eliminates persons of diverse cultures, children who may not have yet acquired speech competence, or

persons with limited speech competence, from participating in Habermas's ideal speech situation.

Fourth, critical theory oversimplifies power and decision-making. Ellsworth (1989) analyzed the literature of critical pedagogy, and took issue with many concepts, including dialogue. She asserts that even when a variety of power perspectives are included in decision making, and even when these persons also possess the knowledge, power, and resources to participate, the task is not one of

> building democratic dialogue between free and equal individuals, but of building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy. . . Rather than dialogue, sometimes groups/persons need time to 'talk back' to the larger group, while the rest. . . listen without interruption (p. 317).

A fifth limitation of critical theory is the consensus approach to conflict and decision making. If a "best" resolution or decision is agreed on, critical theory does not acknowledge ". . . its contradictions, ambiguities, and flaws, [which] will eventually surface, producing deconstruction and disagreement" (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 170). Crucial points of dissensus can be dismissed in the rush to consensus, points which could be keys to deep change. Further, consensus can mask tensions and create an

illusion of community, neither of which is conducive to school renewal.

These appraisals of critical theory, while they provide insight into perspectives beyond the centrality of cognition, capitalism, communication, and consensus, stop short of articulating a theory or pragmatic which can ameliorate these limitations. Feminist poststructuralist theories can address the concerns raised by these appraisals and broaden the critical inquiry approach.

The contribution of feminist poststructural theory

The literature of poststructuralist thought includes many interpretations and "strains" reflected in the work of Derrida (1981), Lacan (1977), Althusser (1969), Foucault (1980), and Lyotard (1984). Poststructuralists agree with nonpositivist critiques of critical theory. For example, in contrast to critical inquiry, poststructuralists do not position a person as reaching toward "rationality," but view a person as part of ". . . an observer-community which constructs interpretations of the world," with interpretations that are neither wrong nor absolutely right (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 94). Rather than viewing persons in a situation as the "centre of rational control and understanding" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 91), the situation is viewed in terms of "paradox and indeterminacy." Poststructuralist thought suggests, in part, that all meaning is

not definitive and shifts depending on perspective, is theoretically distant from practice, and as a result does not support individuals' taking action.

Feminist theorists and other critical theorists have approached poststructural theories with caution. They have been suspicious of a theory, promulgated primarily by Anglo males, which, in part, dismisses the importance of practice, does not adhere to any normative standard of "right" or "wrong," and because of the structural constraints of a patriarchal society, removes the possibilities of persons in power to make a difference, especially when increased numbers of Anglo women and women and men of color are in positions of power (Nicholson, 1990; Scott, 1988). Consequently, the feminist contribution to poststructuralist theories includes, in part, the retention of practice with the development of theory, the reinstatement of the human potential to "make a difference" in practice, and the predisposition to "take a stand" in the midst of continual self-reflection (Lather, 1991).

Furthermore, feminist interpretations of poststructuralist theory reveal limitations similar to those associated with critical theory. Fraser and Nicholson (1988) criticize Lyotard's view of postmodernism for privileging itself as the supreme view of theory, and thus, not considering its own history and that it is, itself ". . . simply one more discourse among others" (p. 87). Similarly, Ross (1988) argues, "Whether it like[s] it or

not, poststructuralism, as a late modernist phenomenon, [bears] with it many of the elitist strains so characteristic of the modernist heyday" (p. x). Feminist poststructural theories thus are considered one lens among many which could be selected to view a situation and they ". . . can also be used for exploitation and oppression" (Capper, 1992, p. 106).

In brief, feminist poststructural theories refer to the interactions and contradictions among subjectivity, power, language, and unquestioned underlying assumptions (i.e., common sense) that are used to examine "how power is exercised" (Weedon, 1987) and the potential for change. From this perspective, power relations are viewed through subjectivity in terms of identity, experience, process, access, and selection; power itself in terms of conflict and dissensus, covert modes of domination, and resistance to power; and language and its authority, history, and availability. The interactions among subjectivity, power, and language contribute to "common sense" assumptions about the constraining and enabling aspects of social life (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Similar to critical inquiry, feminist poststructuralism ". . . attempt[s] to show that we need not take established meanings, values, and power relations for granted. It is

possible to demonstrate where they come from, whose interests they support, how they maintain sovereignty and where they are susceptible to specific pressures for change" (Weedon, 1987, p. 174). Feminist poststructural theory, like critical theory, links individual being and action to societal context.

While literature is emerging which applies poststructural theories to education (Cherryholmes, 1988; Lather, 1991), only Lather reports research that is explicitly grounded in feminist poststructuralism. She used it to analyze student resistance to liberatory pedagogy in higher education. Furthermore, while researchers in educational administration report a few studies grounded in critical inquiry (Anderson, 1990; Scheurich & Imber, 1991), this literature does not include research that is anchored in a feminist poststructural framework. First, each construct will be described in further detail, followed by implications for practice.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity in feminist poststructural thought (or "subject positions") is defined as "ways of being an individual," or personal identity (Weedon, 1987, p. 3). Identity, ". . . is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her knowledge of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). But, a person does not possess just one identity (once and for

all); instead, identity is "precarious, contradictory, and in process" (p. 33), constantly being reshaped whenever we think, speak, or write. Feminist poststructural perspectives, rather than centering on class analyses reflective of traditional critical theory, the generic "human interests" of critical inquiry, or the "holy trinity"--gender, race, and class--of more contemporary critical theorists (Apple, 1986), allows the exploration of the shifting, contradictory, incomplete, and competing interpretations of personal identity.

Weedon (1987) asserts that feminist poststructuralists, in support of Miesenhelder's (1988) critique of the preeminence of cognition and rationality in critical theory, "recognize the importance of the subjective in constituting . . . lived reality. It should not deny subjective experience, since the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society" (p. 8).

Persons have different access to information which can influence their self identity. Weedon (1987) asserts that, "Whereas, in principle, the individual is open to all forms of [identity], in reality individual access to [identity] is governed by historically specific social factors and the forms of power at work in a particular society. . .[and] will determine the range of forms of [identity] immediately open to any individual on the basis of gender, race, class, age, and cultural background [and other differences]" (p. 95).

Not only does society present differential access to knowledge that informs self-identity, choosing identities is a value-laden venture. Weedon (1987) argues:

> The individual is never in a state of innocence when faced by a choice of conflicting subject positions. Indeed, often the individual is unaware that she has a choice. Insertion into language begins at an early age and always happens in the context of specific discourses governing family life and childhood more generally. Moreover, it is a consistent feature of most forms of discourse that they deny their own partiality. They fail to acknowledge that they are but possible versions of meaning rather than "truth" itself and that they represent particular interests. After years of socialization and schooling, these may prove hard to change (p. 98).

Power

Like critical theorists, feminist poststructural theorists focus on power as a central construct--a construct woven into the subjectivity and language aspects of these theories. The feminist poststructural construct of power addresses the limitations inherent in the central role consensus and dialogue play in critical inquiry. Understanding power in feminist poststructural thought includes recognition of the importance of

conflict and dissensus, the disciplinary mode of domination, and resistance to power.

As with language and subjectivity, "instead of consensus being the power house of social action [like critical theory], it is dissensus which continually compels our attention (Cherryholmes, 1986, p. 98). As Derrida suggests (in Cooper and Burrell, 1988), "rationality and rationalization [as exalted in critical theory] are really processes that seek to hide the contradictions at the heart of human existence" (p. 100).

Poststructuralist theorists and critical theorists recognize covert modes of domination. Burrell (1988), in interpreting Foucault, suggests that extreme forms of violence practiced in past societies have been replaced "by complex, subtle forms of correction and training" (p. 225), and that "contemporary society is . . . maintained by . . . the hidden techniques of discipline always at work in 'carceral' institutions" (p. 225). Foucault refers to this form of power as the "disciplinary mode of domination."

Some theorists assume that power, control, and domination exist only in 'carceral' institutions or organizations such as work environments. Thus, a person can leave those environments, and as citizens, participate in communal environments. Burrell (1988) argues, however:

> The reality point is not that most of us do not live in carceral institutions and can therefore escape from their discipline but that, as individuals, we are incarcerated within an organizational world. Thus, whilst we may not live in total institutions, the institutional organization of our lives is total (p. 232).

Finally, Foucault offers a theory of resistance that perpetuates power. Burrell (1988) explains that power relies on multiple points of resistance. Resistance does not reduce constraining power, but rather, enables this power to ". . .grow stronger knowing where its next efforts must be directed" (p. 228).

Language and Discourse

The language and discourse construct of feminist poststructural theory also addresses the limitations of rationality, dialogue, and consensus of critical inquiry. Like critical theory, feminist poststructuralists believe that "the way we speak and write reflects the structures of power in our society" (Lather, 1989, p. 11-12). Feminist poststructural theory, however, suggests that language should be examined and ". . . understood in terms of competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply differences in the organization of social power. . ."(p. 24). Further, according to Cherryholmes (1988), the meanings of words or

situations are ". . . shifting, receding, fractured, incomplete, dispersed, and deferred" (p. 61). In contrast, critical theorists strive for consensus, tend to search for "the" meaning underlying language, and are less inclined to name the "shifting" and "incomplete" meanings of language. Language and discourse in poststructuralist theory refers to both "talk" and "text" (Cherryholmes, 1988), and includes concepts such as discursive fields, authority of discourse, historical basis of language, and availability of discourse.

Discursive fields in feminist poststructural theory refer to language that is specific to the culture of a particular discipline. For example, Weedon (1987) explains that "discursive fields consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organizing social institutions and processes" (p. 35), and refers to law as one discursive field that exemplifies how institutions "define justice in ways which serve particular values and interests" (p. 37). According to Cherryholmes, the language in schools, whether written, gestured, or spoken ". . .determines what counts as true, important, or relevant, what gets spoken, what remains unsaid. [Discursive fields] are generated and governed by rules and power" (p. 35). Cherryholmes (1988) interprets Foucault and frames questions such as how do schools develop a language culture? How does the language used shape and influence educational practices? And how do schools regulate the language used?

Feminist poststructuralist thought challenges the authority of discourses discussed by critical theorists. In other words, who and what structures and cultures have power over what can be spoken or written in the school? The authority of discourse relies on what is viewed as "natural" or "normal" (Weedon, 1987) in language. Weedon argues:

> The guarantee of the authority of a particular discourse will vary from God to science to common sense. . . The person who articulates a discourse can influence its 'truth' and in the case of children, is usually a recognized authority figure. Where adults are concerned, the authority of the speaker [is] 'expert' or 'knowledgeable'. . . (p. 99).

Feminist poststructural theorists, like critical theorists, also emphasize the historical basis of language. For example, Foucault studied the meanings of terms such as madness, punishment, and sexuality, "to uncover the particular regimes of power and knowledge at work in a society and their part in the overall production and maintenance of existing power relations" (Weedon, 1987, p. 108).

Like the availability of identities, discourse availability shapes the nature of societal power. Weedon (1987) argues, "Not all discourses have the social power and authority which comes from a secure institutional location. Yet, in order to have a

social effect, a discourse must at least be in circulation" (p. 110).

The interactions among subjectivity, power, and language contribute to "common sense" assumptions about the constraining and enabling aspects of social life. Common sense relates to:

> particular definitions of what is natural, appropriate, moral, or good . . . . However, its power comes from its claim to be natural, obvious and therefore true. . . These supposed truths are often rhetorically reinforced by expressions such as 'it is well known that,' 'we all know that' and 'everybody knows' which emphasize their obviousness and put social pressure on individuals to accept them (Weedon, 1987, p. 77).

In contrast to critical inquiry, common-sense knowledge:

> . . . is not a monolithic, fixed body of knowledge. It is often contradictory and subject to change. It is not always necessarily conservative in its implications. Its political effects depend on the particular context in which it is articulated (p. 77).

The usefulness of a multiparadigm approach

Using a multiparadigm perspective as one way to inform educational administration in theory and practice--a perspective which incorporates structural functionalism, interpretivism, critical theory, and feminist poststructuralism--can be useful

for at least two reasons. First, each paradigm has limitations, and the other paradigms can ameliorate some of these limitations. For example, if the education of persons along the axis of oppression is a concern, the goal of structural functionalism is not conducive to the needed changes, given that this perspective seeks to fine tune yet maintain existing structures and cultures. While interpretivism provides insight into the meaning of events and situations for persons, it also is not aimed toward significant change. Critical theory, while centered on oppression and radical change also has limitations and in the field of educational administration has failed to provide specific guidance for practice. Feminist poststructural theory can ameliorate some of the limitations of critical theory. The language and concepts of feminist poststructuralism, however, can challenge its practice within the constraints of current societal and educational structures.

Second, a multiparadigm approach to educational administration serves as an example of valuing multiple ways of viewing a situation from differing epistemologies and methodologies and taking action beyond that of multiple approaches within one or two paradigms. In an age where it is important to pay attention to multiple "ways of knowing," a multiparadigm approach can be useful.

Implications for practice

A multiparadigm perspective of educational administration can inform practice by moving beyond viewing practice from singular paradigm or "biparadigm" approaches to practice. For example Fullan (1991) approaches educational change from a structural perspective and also emphasizes the importance of meaning in change, paralleling the structural functional and interpretive paradigms. A similar example resides in Deal and Peterson's (1991) technical and symbolic aspects of leadership. In curriculum theory, another parallel example can be found in the debates between behavioristic/reductionist learning process vs. the constructive/holistic learning processes (Poplin & Stone, 1992).

A multiparadigm perspective can also be used to guide educational administrator practice and preparation in a pluralistic society (Capper, in press). In this case, the critical theory and feminist poststructural paradigms guide all aspects of change. Their perspectives guide all decision making, evaluation, data collection, planning, policy making, program changes, and all other administrative practices. The feminist poststructural paradigm can support this goal by providing administrators and faculty with tools and guideposts to critically examine their own actions and their policies and practices in relation to social reconstructionist education, by using deconstruction and reconstruction and the guideposts of

subjectivity, language, power, and common sense. The structural functionalist paradigm provides structure in day-to-day activities for achieving critical goals. For example, no matter how decentralized the decision-making, or the extent of cooperation, collaboration, and power sharing, some structure is necessary, at least in our current society, to carry out goals.[5] The interpretivist paradigm can assist administrators, their staff, and faculty in understanding the meaning of policies and programs for the persons they are intended to assist. Even though the critical theory and feminist poststructural paradigms may guide all aspects of administration, one paradigm may be more predominant in one stage than another.

In fact, when the educational goal is the consideration and empowerment of persons along the axis of oppression, the goals of critical and feminist poststructural theories are preeminent over the goals of the other paradigms. If the educational goal is anything other than social change, then administrator practice and preparation would exclude the paradigms associated with critical theory and feminist poststructuralism, reducing the framework to a "biparadigm" approach which incorporates structural functionalism and interpretism.

Informing theory

A multiparadigm approach goes beyond multiple frame approaches like Bolman and Deal's (1991). For example, even

though Bolman and Deal advocate "reframing" situations to analyze problems and solutions from different theoretical perspectives, their frames remain within the structural functional and interpretive paradigms. Moreover, a multiparadigm perspective can move beyond the "paradigm wars" in educational administration between the structural functional, interpretive and critical theory scholars.

Summary

Critical inquiry has been promulgated as a means of addressing school renewal based on its multiparadigm approach. However, the critical theory component of critical inquiry includes limitations that constrain its emancipatory potential. Feminist poststructural theory, with its inclusion of the subjective and affective; multiple approaches to and inclusion of the identity of all persons, including those along the axis of oppression; and its appreciation for contradiction, dissensus, and complexity, can broaden critical inquiry, and can strengthen its use as a multiparadigm perspective for educational administration theory and practice.

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Table 1 Feminist Poststructural Theories: Subjectivity, Language and Discourse, Power, and Common Sense

I. Subjectivity

1. Identity and process
   a. Are the persons represented presented in their identity (once and for all), or are subject positions shown to be "precarious, contradictory, . . . in process, . . "(Weedon, 1987, p. 33), and "a site of disunity and conflict" (Weedon, 1987, p. 21)?
   b. Is identity presented multiply, and as evolutionary, constantly in process?
2. Subjective experience
   a. To what extent are "subjective" experiences of individuals considered important?
3. Access to and choosing identity for participants and readers
   a. What identities, societal and institutional, are made available (like access to discourse)?
   b. Are participants and readers aware they have an identity choice? Do those in power obscure this option by "deny[ing] their own partiality. . . [and] fail[ing] to acknowledge that they are but possible versions of meaning rather than 'truth' itself and that they represent particular interests" (Weedon, 1987, p. 98)?

II. Power
1. Conflict and dissensus
   a. To what extent is the focus on dissensus, resistance, contradiction, and conflict, or on consensus?
   b. To what extent does the text ". . . seek to hide the contradictions at the heart of human existence" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 100)?
2. Covert modes of domination
   a. To what extent does the text recognize that power, control, and domination are "everywhere". . . ,that "we are incarcerated within an organizational world. . . ,[that] the institutional organization of our lives is total" (Burrell, 1989, p. 232)?
3. Resistance that perpetuates power
   a. To what extent does the text include the possible range of "points of resistance which play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle within relationships" (Burrell, 1989, p. 228), and show that this resistance emanates from "webs of power" rather than from singular sources?

III. Language and Discourse

1. Role of language
   a. Is language understood ". . . in terms of competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply differences in the organization of social power. . ." (Weedon, 1987, p.24)?
   b. Does the language indicate ". . . meanings to be shifting, receding, fractured, incomple'e, dispersed, and deferred" (Cherryholmes, 1990, p. 61), or is the focus on "the" meaning underlying language?
   c. To what extent are particular values and interests served, and which are silenced?
2. Authority of discourse
   a. What is viewed as "natural," "normal," based on God, science or common sense?
   b. Who is articulating the discourse? Who is the authority, expert, or knowledgeable one?
3. History and availability of language
   a. What words have questionable histories that could be obscured, or definitions that can ". . . uncover the particular regimes of power and knowledge at work in a society and their part in the overall production and maintenance of existing power relations?" (Weedon, 1987, p. 108)?
   b. How do the uses of these terms maintain the status quo in regard to persons along the axis of oppression?
   c. What discourses are named?
   d. Which are silenced?

IV. Common Sense

1. What aspects are claimed to be "natural, obvious, and therefore true. . . [in] expressions such as 'it is well known that', 'we all know that,' and 'everybody knows'. . ." (Weedon, 1987, p. 77).
2. What does the text reveal about culture or "the way we do things around here?"

1. Space limitations prevent a thorough explanation of the formation of paradigms, a specific analysis of each one, and a description of the long scholarly heritage they each have in sociology, philosophy, and educational administration. Burrell and Morgan (1982) devote over 400 pages to the topic of paradigms in the sociology of organizations. Ritzer (1980) also devotes an entire book to the topic. Skrtic (1991) explains the paradigms in relation to special education, and Foster (1986) outlines the paradigms and their assumptions in relation to educational administration. The work by Gioia and Pitre (1990) not only describes the paradigms, but also argues for a multiparadigm perspective.

2. In this conceptualization of a multiparadigm view of educational administration, the feminist poststructural perspective can make at least two contributions. First, the feminist poststructural perspective can constitute a fourth paradigm beyond structural-functionalism, interpretivism, and critical theory. Second, feminist poststructural theories can also support a multiparadigm view, given that some tenets of poststructural theory suggest multiple ways to view a situation, and none are the "right" way.

3. While all four frames of Bolman and Deal's (1991) approach to organizational theory are not oriented toward social change, in some ways the structural frame provides another way to illustrate the structural functionalist paradigm. The assumptions of the structural frame include: organizations exist primarily to accomplish established goals; for any organization, there is a structure appropriate to the goals, the environment, the technology, and the participants; and organizational problems usually reflect inappropriate structure and can be resolved through redesign and organization (see Capper & Larkin, 1992, for an application of these frames to the integration of students with disabilities into general education). As Bolman and Deal describe and use the frame in their work, it emanates from a structural functionalist epistemology. I contend in this chapter, however, that these structural assumptions can be used for emancipatory ends. And, in fact, an administrator cannot "transform" a school without considering organizational structure.

4. In some ways, Bolman and Deal's (1991) symbolic frame of organizational theory represents the interpretivist paradigm. It isn't oriented toward social change, and its assumptions include: "What is most important about any event is <u>not</u> what happened, but <u>what it means</u>. Events and meanings are loosely coupled: the same events can have very different meanings for different people because of differences in the schema that they use to interpret

their experience. Many organizational events and processes are important more for what they express than for what they produce" (p. 244).

5. One example of this need for structure, is the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, and its associated twelve step programs. Even though the organization as a whole and its individual groups do not have a tight, hierarchy of governance, and is often cited as the most decentralized, power-sharing organization in the world, it does rely on some structure, such as basic traditions which guide the groups and steps which guide individuals. This example, as well as others, such as feminist groups, attest to the fact that while some structure is necessary (even as basic as setting a time and place to meet), persons can significantly diminish the need for hierarchy and increase the value of the group process itself.